The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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CONTENTS OF NO. 12.

COMPENSATION 137
LOVING GOD THROUGH HUMAN LOVE 137
THE STILL HOUR 139
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 139
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL 143
NATURAL HISTORY: BIRDS AND THEIR NESTS . 145
AMUSEMENT COLUMN 146
THE BIRDS' PETITION 147
IMPORTANT NOTICES 148

COMPENSATION.

In that new world toward which our feet are set,
Shall we find aught to make our hearts forget
Earth's homely joys and her bright hours of bliss?
Has Heaven a spell divine enough for this?
For who the pleasure of the spring shall tell,
When on the leafless stalk the brown buds swell,
When the grass brightens and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song?

Oh, sweet the dropping eve, the blush of morn,
The starlit sky, the rustling fields of corn,
The soft airs blowing from the freshening seas,
The sunflecked shadow of the stately trees,
The mellow thunder and the lulling rain
(The warm, delicious, happy summer rain),
When the grass brightens and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

O beauty manifold, from morn till night,
Dawn's flush, noon's blaze, and sunset's tender light!
O fair, familiar features, changes sweet
Of her revolving seasons, storm, and sleet
And golden calm, as slow she wheels through space,
From snow to roses,—and how dear her face
When the grass brightens, when the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

O happy earth! O home so well beloved!
What recompense have we, from thee removed?
One hope we have that overtops the whole,—
The hope of finding every vanished soul
We love and long for daily, and for this
Gladly we turn from thee, and all thy bliss,
Even at thy loveliest, when the days are long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

—*Celia Thaxter.*

LOVING GOD THROUGH HUMAN LOVE.

"*Hereby we know that we love the children of God when we love God, and do his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.*"—1 JOHN v. 2, 3.

Horace Bushnell, a modern apostle of the deep things of the spirit, opened a long-hid mystery when he said, "Loving God is but letting God love us." The letting is the important act here. Not that we can help his loving us, if we tried never so strenuously: it is his nature, and he is not to be turned from it, fortunately for us; but there is a difference in the love of a father for a prodigal son among the swine and for the same son saying, "Father, I have sinned,"—a difference, I mean, in the effect of it on the son. It could not reach him before. Now it can, and is happy in the fact; and he, being responsive, feels it working in him great surges of shame for the past and love for the love that never let him go.

All love has one source. Do our mothers love us? It is God in them that breaks out into love in its highest manifestations, with its divine unselfishness and its clinging power. Wherever love is, we get a glimpse of the divine and infinite. There is, doubtless, a mere animal instinct, such

as the lioness feels toward her cubs, which simulates the higher thing which is real love. It is sometimes left to a human mother in good society to root out even that. But I am talking of love. Most of us have known it well. Whether it has come to us from mother or from friend; whether it is the love of family or the love of man and woman or the love of some great nature that has been down with us in the darkness where we walked, and has clung to us and would not let us go, and has lifted us almost by its own energy out of despair or sin or sorrow,—there has been in it the love of God. It is only as such love responds to the Spirit of God in it that it does and dares, and clings to us and will not let us go, though it cost struggle and patience and sacrifice and pain. Or the love that comes as sunlight into our lives, and is round us as an atmosphere in which we live, which makes all the ongoing of our days sweet and happy and full of light and hope,—this is of God. "Love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

And this love, as a channel of the love of God, is the power that most often lifts us up into the clearer realms where we are at one with the divine, and its love becomes real to our hungry hearts.

The love we have to God is realized in our love to men. It cannot abide alone. They who have thought to gain it by retirement and meditation have found it only a will-o'-the-wisp save as it has issued in the love that seeks men and tries to do them good. For the love of God is not a mere feeling, as I have said,—a gush of emotion in which the soul is rapt away to things ineffable. It is a spirit, an atmosphere, in which one lives; and "he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." But to dwell in love, to be really baptized with its spirit, is to have that energy of it within us that seeks continually to find exercise for itself and actually to give itself to others.

Unfortunately, the service of God has too often been conceived of as the conferring of something on him, by ownership or sacrifice, by which it is thought he will be pleased. But what can we do for him by our offering of gifts for his use, or by the singing of his praises, save to give expression to what is in us, and thereby satisfy our own cravings? Have the strong words of the old prophets of Israel no meaning for us to-day?—

"Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah,
And bow myself before the high God?
Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,
With calves of a year old?
Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,
Or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first born for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;
And what doth Jehovah require of thee
But to do justly, and love kindness,
And to walk humbly with thy God?"

Is he not as likely to say to us as to Israel at Bethel:—

"I hate, I despise your feasts,
And I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Take away from me the noise of thy songs,
For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.
But let judgment run down as waters,
And righteousness as a mighty stream."

The real love of God will manifest itself in what we do for men. It will set itself to help on the kingdom of God on earth as the dearest end it can set before itself. When Jesus pictured the test of human lives, he told how the king would say to some: "You have been loving me: I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and in prison, and ye ministered unto me." "When, Lord?" they say in astonishment. "When you did it to the least of these my brethren." The Samaritan did not worship in the Jerusalem temple: his own on Mount Gerizim had long been levelled to the ground. But, when he took care of the wounded man on the road to Jericho, he showed himself a lover of God beyond the priest and Levite of orthodox connections and habits, who passed by on the other side.

Men and women are warned not to love each other too dearly, lest God be jealous, not to love their children too much, lest he take them away. This is not religion. Real love does not exhaust itself by giving: it *grows* by giving. The more you love your child, if it be unselfish love, the more you will love God; for the loving of a little child brings you into that atmosphere and

spirit of love where the heart is living and warm, and goes forth to God as naturally as the sunlight streams into the ether. You will need to be cautioned lest your love of human kind become selfish and exclusive, and is indulged as a mere luxury. That vitiates it. But the more you love your brother whom you have seen, unselfishly, the more you will love God and see him, too, with the spiritual vision.

To sum up, then, this relation of divine and human love: all love is of One, and the line cannot be drawn where the human stops and the divine begins. But we may feel sure of this, that to see the love of God in all the love that comes to us, to recognize it in all the unselfishness we see, is the only way to know it truly, and the most direct road to the clearer sense of it as an indwelling life.

We cannot do our duty to any one without love. We cannot keep his commandments without doing our duty to men. But, when we learn to love and to obey the promptings of love in our human relations, we find that "his commandments are not grievous" any more. The spirit in us is in sympathy with the spirit in him, and we are the children of our Father which is in heaven.—*H. P. de Forest, in Outlook.*

THE STILL HOUR.

WORK AND PRAYER.

Behold us, Lord, a little space
From daily toil set free,
And met within this peaceful place,
To rest awhile with thee.

Around us rolls the ceaseless tide
Of labor, strife, and care;
And scarcely dare we turn aside
For one brief hour of prayer.

Yet these are not the only walls
Wherein thou may'st be sought:
On homeliest work thy blessing falls,
In truth and patience wrought.

Thine is the forge, the loom, the mart,
The wealth of land and sea,
The worlds of science and of art,
Revealed and ruled by thee.

Then let us prove our heavenly birth
In all we do or know,
And own thee king of all the earth,
And life of all below.

Work shall be prayer if all be wrought
As thou would'st have it done,
And prayer, by thee inspired and taught,
Itself with work be one.

—*John Ellerton.*

HOME TRIALS.

Almighty and holy Father, I am going back to a life that has always been fraught with temptations for me; and, though I know that those which will beset me spring chiefly out of the foolish vanity of my own heart, yet of myself alone I shall fail to resist them, as I have so often done before. Therefore, O, God! I claim thy fatherly succor. Help me to cast my foolishness away. Teach me not to scorn those things which irritate me. They are small and paltry, but they are strong and mighty to overthrow me. Teach me to restrain the cutting answer, the sharp retort that are so pleasant for one short moment to make, so bitter to remember afterwards. Help me, O, Lord! to think of thee when I am tempted. Take not away the temptation from me, but for thy pity's sake make me strong to stand against it; to bear the taunt and yet keep silence unto thee; to be stanch and true to thee, and to the faith I so unworthily profess. Teach me in each temptation to see a chance of proving that my love to thee is no vain delusion. Hold me up, O, God! for I cannot stand alone.—*From "Alone to the Alone," compiled by Frances Power Cobbe.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*."

This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address, Miss Mary A. Vinal, secretary, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Juvenile.

"Little Make-believe," "First Reader, Æsop and Mother Goose," Louise Nash; "Short Stories about Animals"; "Tom Tucker and Little Bo-peep"; "Carrots," Mrs. Molesworth; "Flower Fables," Louisa Alcott; "Stories of Indian Children"; "Sunday-school Stories for Little Children"; "The Bodleys Telling Stories"; "Typical Tales from Shakespeare"; "Heroes of the Middle West"; "Docas, the Indian Boy."

Miscellaneous.

"Stories by American Authors"; "The Mists of the Valley," Agnes Giberne; "Old Corner Cupboard"; "Burglars in Paradise," E. S. Phelps; "Our Houseboat on the Nile"; "In Varying Moods"; "An Iceland Fisherman," Pierre Loti; "By the Tiber"; "The History of Rasselas"; "The Peckster Professorship"; "Memoir of Mary L. Ware"; "My Lady Nicotine," Barrie; "Mother's Recompense," Grace Aguilar; "Handbook of Universal Literature"; "The Life of Nancy," S. O. Jewett; "Studies for Stories," Jean Ingelow; "The Parsonage Porch," Bradley Gilman.

Over Land and Sea, a magazine printed in German, is offered by Mrs. C. E. Chamberlain, 251 Hope Avenue, Passaic, New Jersey.

The following offer is by Miss Evelyn M. Tibbits, 415 Second Avenue, Lansingburg, New York: *Railroad Gazette, Engineering News, Electrical World and Engineer, Street Railway Journal, Engineering and Mining Journal, Electrical Engineer, Cassier's Magazine.*

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. Miss India V. Edwards, Floyd, Virginia, care of V. M. Sowdie. Is a teacher, and would appreciate any reading matter, magazines, books, or old papers. She would enjoy especially reading "Madcap Violet" and "A Window in Thrums." Reading to be passed on.

2. Miss Addie E. Ballew, Lenoir, North Carolina, R. F. D. No. 1. Wishes books or magazines for herself and mother, the latter a long-suffering invalid, and herself housed for several years. Literature passed on to others.

3. I would like very much to join the Cheerful Letter Club, as an important part of its mission is to mothers. I have a girl five years old and a baby boy six months old. Also my husband's niece lives with me, aged twelve. I would love so much to receive books connected with the training of children, and picture books for children. Mrs. N. A. Coleman, Pearch, Bedford County, Virginia.

4. Sam B. Ross, Salisbury, North Carolina, 211 McCubbins Street, writes: "Will some one please send me something to read? I am an operator in a cotton-mill, and spend

my spare time in reading. Have a family of four, so do not have much to spare to buy reading."

5. Mrs. D. A. Little, Olive Branch, North Carolina, a young woman with two children, will be glad of reading suitable for herself and the boy of seven years.

6. I am a widow's daughter, am very fond of reading, and would be very glad of any reading matter sent me, and especially "Evangeline," by Longfellow, and Bryant's "Poems." Ruth Roger, Stella, Virginia.

7. I am in very poor health, and not able to support my family of wife and two children and buy reading matter. Any papers, books, or letters, will be highly appreciated. E. O. Capron, Wharf, North Carolina.

8. Miss Annie Shelton, Preston, Virginia, will be glad of any reading, which she will pass on.

9. I am a poor woman not able to buy books, and have five children, and would like some of you to send me a good book. Mrs. J. M. Lovin, Gibson's Mills, Richmond County, North Carolina.

10. I want to thank the dear Cheerful Letter friends who have sent me reading matter. I enjoy *The Cheerful Letter* so much. I shall be very glad to get books on pedagogy and theory and practices of teaching, "The History of the Empress Josephine," "Steppingstones to Literature," "First Book of Botany," Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," and "The Gospel Hymns" with notes. I do not want to be voracious; but I need so many books in teaching, and there are no libraries in the schools where I teach, or even in the neighborhood. M. Ada Cannaday, Floyd, Virginia.

11. My little ones and myself have been cheered in many ways since becoming members of Cheerful Letter. I have five children. The oldest, a boy of thirteen, is the only one that attends school. He would appreciate a year's subscription to the *Youth's Companion* very much. I have also three little girls whose ages are ten years, seven years, and five years old, and a baby boy nineteen months old. The little girls would like "nature readers," and I as well as they wish so often for a United States Atlas or an Atlas of the World. We have lived without neighbors for three years. Hoping I have not asked for too much, Mrs. L. M. Glenn, Mound City, Holt County, Missouri.

12. Mrs. T. A. Gregory, Swansonville, Virginia, asks for reading for herself and six children.

13. Mary Pauline Tinsley, Abert, Virginia, asks for *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Woman's Home Companion.*

14. Mrs. Dollie Wallace, Manitou, Oklahoma, will be glad of reading, which she will pass on.

15. Mrs. Eugene Smith, Spencer, Virginia, asks for magazines or papers of any kind.

16. I live fifteen miles from any town on a farm. I am married, but have no children. I assure you, you will be giving much pleasure by sending reading to one who is not able to buy such literature as she would like. I would be glad to correspond with some friend of the circle. (Mrs.) A. N. Shelton, Spencer, Henry County, Virginia.

17. Please allow me to thank the kind friends who have sent me clippings and pictures. I have more than enough to finish my scrap-book, and will give all I have over to some one else. I should like to have any of the Pansy books, and would be so glad if any one would send me a fashion guide for mamma. (Miss) Pearle L. Brown, Vinton, Virginia.

18. Mrs. C. L. Boynton, Biltmore, North Carolina, will be glad to receive any reading.

19. Mrs. Foster Whiting, Lisbon, New Hampshire, R. F. D. No. 1, will be very grateful for a dictionary.

20. Mrs. Annie Wallace, Alvarado, Texas, asks for reading for herself and little girl of nine years.

21. I shall be very thankful for reading suitable for a girl in her "teens." I have been studying at home ever since my mother died (she has been dead three years). I would also like to have Cutter's "Physiology" and White's "Arithmetic." Madgie Grant, Pearch, Virginia.

22. I want especially to thank the friends who sent me the books. My children enjoy reading them so much,—a boy seventeen and a girl thirteen, one girl eleven and a little boy eight years. We live ten miles from town, one mile from church, and hear

one sermon each month. No school this time of year. We have about three months of school in the fall, and then nothing for the remainder of the winter to employ their minds. I try to teach mine at home, as far as I am able to furnish books for them; and that is not very much. I have had to work very hard, washing, ironing, sewing, and picking cotton, to raise my children while a widow. This is a very poor country,—rocky and mountainous. Our mail is carried by hack. Our town has one store, one blacksmith shop, and one cotton gin, one mile from where we live. Mrs. E. F. Lowe, Centre Hill, Arkansas.

23. Almost one year has expired since I first wrote to you, asking for reading. I have received many good books and magazines since that time, for which I am very grateful. I have also received every copy of *The Cheerful Letter*, which I am very proud to get. I read and pass them on to others who are anxious to read. I should like to have the Life of Christ, "The Leopard's Spots," and copies of *Youth's Companion*, or any papers of any kind, to distribute in Sunday-school. Address Miss Sophronia Morgan, Rushing, Union County, North Carolina.

24. Any books of history or other educational works will be thankfully received and faithfully studied by J. F. Winters, Southside, Douglas County, Wash.

25. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends*,—Will some of you please send me "He fell in Love with his Wife," and "Found, yet Lost," both by E. P. Roe. I will be so thankful. I get reading matter from one of Cheerful Letter friends. Will be glad if some of the friends will write to me and send any books or magazines. I love dearly to get letters as well as reading matter. Mrs. R. B. Ellington, Sandy Ridge, Stokes County, North Carolina.

26. Miss Mary Dameron, 625 Cabell Street, Lynchburg, Virginia, will be very glad to receive anything on physical culture, especially with cuts or illustrations of exercises.

27. Some friend has just sent me the February issue of *The Cheerful Letter*. Frances Power Cobbe's "Faith and Duty" is just along the line of matter I have had in mind for some time, and I am anxious to read and know more of the subject of will power; *i.e.*, how to control our thoughts so as to be well mentally and physically. I hope this will reach you in time to have my request published in March issue of *The Cheerful Letter*. I have a friend (one of my family) who is trying to get well from chronic dyspepsia without use of drugs, and would like to receive some good work on physical culture and health *v.* drugs, naturopath, will power, or anything along the line of nature cure. Would be glad to know the Kneippe water cure. For myself, I would like to have Emerson's "Essays." I do hope some of the Cheerful Letter friends will send me some literature on how to get health and keep it. Thanking the friends for past favors, I am very truly, Mrs. E. W. Pryor, Chestnut, Virginia.

28. I am a country girl and am trying hard to get an education, so ask you to send me some books and magazines, as I am poor and have not much to buy with. My mother is afflicted with rheumatism and not able to do much work. I have to stay at home to help her, and I would be glad to have some books or papers to read. Fannie Vernon, Nettle Ridge, Patrick County, Virginia.

29. It has been a long time since I received or asked for any reading, and I have missed it very much. Will some of the kind friends send me the *Delineator*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, or the *Designer*, or any good ladies' magazine. I take in a good deal of sewing, and would especially like a fashion magazine. Will share what I receive with others. Mrs. Lucinda Bailey, Allwood, Virginia.

30. A maiden lady, lonely and in need of cheer, would like to receive reading matter. Would especially be glad to get papers or magazines published in England. Address Miss Susan J. Bishop, Stuart, Virginia.

31. Miss Cora Dicks, Portersville, Perry County, Ohio, would like Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Robinson Crusoe."

32. Mrs. Mary E. Mattocks (teacher of music), Swansboro, North Carolina, would be pleased to receive, through the Cheerful Letter Club, music of any kind,— sheet music, back numbers of *Musical Record*, magazines containing music. Second hand music will be acceptable.

33. My oldest two children are going to school, and they need two books,—Webster's "Primary Dictionary" and "First Step in North Carolina History." Mrs. Martha Hildreth, Ansonville, North Carolina.

34. I have six children, ages from two to fifteen years, and am not able to buy reading of any kind and we are denied the privilege of church and Sunday-school. Would like the *Youths' Companion*, but would be thankful for anything. Mrs. S. T. Conley, Andrews, North Carolina.

35. My father is an invalid, but can read if it is *light* reading. It is his only comfort; and that is why I am writing to you, hoping you will be able to send him something to cheer his lonely hours. I will mention three books which he has spoken of frequently, "Who Goes There?" "To Have and to Hold," and "A Sign of the Countersign." If you should ever see the magazine called *Everybody's Magazine*, he would be delighted to receive some of them. I hope I am not a beggar; but, if you knew how little he has which he can enjoy at all, you would see where the reading comes in. (Mrs.) Lillie Davis, Shiloh, New Jersey.

36. A little girl of thirteen would be glad to join the Book Club and receive reading suitable for that age. Address Miss Kate Hawkins, Stuart, Virginia.

37. I wish to thank all friends who have remembered myself and family in the past year in sending reading and tokens of kindness. We have moved on a farm; and, as we rent this place, we have no school or Sunday-school within six miles, so we will not have much pleasure this summer. My family consists of five girls, from five to sixteen years, and one boy, two years As I cannot afford to buy, I should like to ask for a dictionary and United States History. Mrs. W. F. Munt, Grand Rapids, Nebraska.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

In default of letters from mothers, perhaps you will not object to one from an old maid aunt. Did it ever occur to you that, in the remote places in which *The Cheerful Letter* is so especially welcome, it is often hard to procure either writing paper or postage stamps? Besides, I venture to say that *The Cheerful Letter* goes into many homes in which the expense of even a single letter has to be considered in making up accounts. I would suggest, therefore, to those who send books, that, if they would not only send postage, but also put a block of cheap paper and a few envelopes into the parcel, they would greatly enhance the value of their gifts. Who knows what "mute, inglorious Milton" there may be among our mothers, who would write the most brilliant letters, full of experience and wisdom, if she only had the means? I have always been an interested reader of the "Mothers' Council," though ill-health keeps me from writing as often as I would like to; and I was particularly interested in the discussion about whipping.

I cannot altogether agree with the woman who said, "Let us take our mothers for examples." If I had children, I should try to imitate much that was excellent in my own mother's methods; and I should also try to avoid some of her mistakes. Mothers were right in insisting upon prompt, unquestioning obedience: were they always right in their methods of enforcing it? I should like to tell my experience with a little nephew two or three years old. He was called a very wilful child; and, when I had the care of him for a week, I expected that it would take at least that long to teach him to obey me. He was very daring; and when he disobeyed, as he often did, he did it openly, and with such a charming look of defiance that there was strong temptation to laugh instead of punishing.

His mother would laugh one day, indulging every whim, while the next she would lose her temper at the merest trifle and whip him, so that I longed to snatch him away from her and run off with him. *I did the same thing every time he disobeyed me*, whether in a great or a small matter, if there can be such a thing as a *small* disobedience. I always shut him up in a large, light room. There was a large key-hole in the door, so that I could look in and see all that he did. At first he would fly into a fury, kicking and screaming in a manner that made me doubt if it were right to make him so angry. I did not tell him that I would let him out as soon as he had stopped crying, for I thought that would suggest resistance, when my object was to make him *feel that he had done*

wrong. Just as soon as the loud screams changed to that pitiful wail which tells that the heart is softened, I went in, took him in my lap, and let him finish his crying on my bosom; for I wished him to *feel* that it was *all done in love.*

"Now, darling," I asked, when he was calm enough to reason with, "what made aunty shut you up?" No answer, so I answered for him. "Because you were naughty and did what I told you not to [or wouldn't do as I told you]. Little boys like you don't know what is right for them to do, so somebody has to tell them. Mamma tells you when you are at home; but, as she is not here, I have to tell you for her." He did not seem quite convinced by this argument, so I proceeded. "I don't like to shut you up. I hate to do it just as much as you hate to be shut up; but *I shall have to every time you disobey.* Now won't you try to obey, so that I won't have to shut you up?" He was quite ready to promise, and to seal the compact with a kiss; but it was necessary to repeat the lesson three times that day and three times the next. His surprise at being dealt with so summarily and regularly was pathetic. He evidently thought he could wear out my patience, but I let him see that I would persevere as long as he would. On the afternoon of the second day, when, after the fourth disobedience, he saw me coming, he looked up, and said very earnestly, "I'll be good." I thought of the woman in Abbott's "Mother at Home," who said, "But you *have* disobeyed me, and you must be punished"; but the chief defect of such rigorous measures is that they aim only at repressing the evil, and not at developing the good in a child. Here was the germ of a real penitence that I felt it would be well to cultivate. "Will you *really* be good?" I asked. "Sometimes you *say* 'be good,' and then you are very naughty." "'Es, *I will*," was the earnest reply; and he was good, not only for the rest of that day, but throughout his visit he obeyed me perfectly, and I was surprised at the ease with which I had won the victory, without having struck a blow or spoken a harsh word.

"Much good it will do to punish him," said an uncle who did not favor gentle methods, "if you pet him after it. You should make him feel that he is a very naughty boy." "That was just what I wished to do; but, if I had driven him away from me in anger and scorn, I think it would have had just the opposite effect."

In an early number of *The Cheerful Letter* I ventured to criticise some things in the "Mother at Home," which I mistakenly attributed to Jacob Abbott, and so called down upon my head perhaps the sternest rebuke which our gentle editor is capable of offering. Of course, no one remembers it now. So I will repeat what I said then, that the only moral that I could ever see to the story of the boy who was whipped five times to make him say the letter A was that the father was a fool to get into such a discussion about such a trifle. The incident is said to have taken place in the evening, when a child is often obstinate because tired and sleepy; and, if true, it is more than probable that his, "I cannot say A," meant what was quite true, that he felt unequal to the nervous strain of saying a lesson. In such a case I would encourage a child to say, "Please excuse, papa"; and I would do so unless it was a matter of far more importance than saying a letter.

The habit of obedience may be formed very early in life; and, the sooner and more unconsciously it is formed, the better. I was pleased with the answer of a little girl, who, being asked in Sunday-school, "Why do you obey your mother?" replied: "I'm sure I don't know. She tells me to do a thing; and I do it, *just because it is natural, I suppose.*" The habit of obedience had been formed so early that it was second nature to her.

Some allowance should be made for the fact that a child is often unable to express itself in words, and some for the fact that a little child has no more the power to resist a strong temptation than it has to carry a heavy weight. Both moral and physical strength must come slowly and gradually. If you wilfully put a forbidden article where a baby can reach it, and leave it alone with it, you are really playing the part of a tempter, and developing the desire to do what is wrong. I have known a mother to do this with a view to teaching the child to resist temptation. She might as well try to force it to work all day to develop its physical strength. "What credit is it to a child to do right, if it is not

tempted?" asked a mother. But even He who never did wrong prayed, and taught his disciples to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

The mother has not fulfilled her duty to her child when she has punished him. She must represent to him in his tender years "the Father and the Mother God." She must, and she has the power to, help him to overcome temptation; she must give to him out of her own strength; she must be to him a refuge in every trial, a "very present help in time of trouble."

(To be continued.)

NATURAL HISTORY.

BIRDS AND THEIR NESTS.

Swallows.

Who does not know the pleasurable sensation of welcoming back to our shores in the month of May the elegantly shaped and beautifully colored swallow, that saucy truant who deserted us last season as soon as he began to find the weather inconveniently cold and his supply of insect food somewhat scanty? How we love to watch him as he skims overhead with his fellows on fine summer evenings, every now and then giving utterance to his happiness in a prolonged twittering cry, which, though not loud, is musical in its tone and pleasing to the ear!

The color of the swallow is very beautiful. On the throat and forehead there is a large chestnut-colored patch, while the back is of a deep, glossy steel-blue color, fading away to white on the under part of the body. A very dark blue band crosses the upper part of the chest. The tail feathers are black, the two on the outside being greatly elongated, which gives the tail the forked appearance which is one of the distinguishing features of the bird.

It is a very familiar little creature, and on account of the trustfulness with which it fixes its domicile under the shelter of human habitations it is in general as secure from molestation as our dear familiar robin or his pert little cousin, the wren.

Besides being a very cruel deed to kill a swallow, it would be very bad policy to do so, as the bird is exclusively an insect-eater, and the number of troublesome gnats and flies which it consumes is quite surprising. The mouth of the swallow which had been inadvertently shot proved on examination to be packed full of flies, which it was, no doubt, intending to take home to its little family.

The nest of the common swallow is too well known to require minute description. It is always placed in a sheltered locality, sometimes within a disused chimney, but more generally under the eaves of houses or in the corners of windows; and, although the outside is only rough clay, the inside is sufficiently warm and comfortable, being softly lined with fine dry grass. Sometimes two families are reared in the season; but, when this is the case, the latter brood often fare very badly, being deserted by their parents, who, being quite unable to resist the migratory impulse, take flight with their companions, leaving the little nestlings to perish of cold and hunger. In one recorded case the male bird flew away with his fellows; but the mother remained behind until her little ones were able to fly, when the trio also disappeared. Although these birds are so swift on the wing, they become utterly worn out with fatigue while crossing the sea, and often flock in great numbers upon the rigging of passing ships, where they remain until able to resume their journey.

It has been proved, beyond all doubt that the swallow, guided by unerring instinct, always finds its way back to the very nest which it had made or in which it had been reared; and it has been observed that, if during its absence the house on which it had built had been taken down, the poor bird shows great distress, flying to and fro in vain search of its lost home, and all the time filling the air with its mournful cries.

In America we have a very pretty little swallow who constructs its nest of a very peculiar shape. Like all the swallow tribe, mud is used for the outside wall of its domicile; but in shape the nest resembles nothing so much as a Florentine oil-flask. These strange nests are built in close proximity to each other and in very great numbers. These birds attach themselves to human habitations, barns, and outhouses. When they build in the open country, they

choose a wall or rock, placing their nests under the shelter of some projecting cliff, hence their popular name of cliff swallows. The plumage of this little bird is a deep, glossy violet, the under portion of the body being a grayish-white, with a ruddy tint upon the breast. The tail is not nearly so forked as in other swallows.

The pretty little sand-martin is the smallest member of the swallow family, being less than five inches in total length. Although it has a small beak and slender claws, it is as expert a tunnel driver as either the mole or the rat, and can dig a burrow of considerable depth in the solid sandstone rock. Not that the bird by preference undertakes a task so laborious: it much prefers to find a loose, friable, sandy soil; but, when this is not attainable, it sets to work with extraordinary vigor and untiring industry, chipping away the sandstone at a great rate with repeated blows of its conical bill, at the same time clearing away the falling material with its claws. The tunnel thus made slopes upward to prevent the rain from lodging, and is frequently three feet in length. A little heap of soft feathers and dry grass at the end of the recess is all the nest which the parent bird considers necessary, and here the hen-bird lays four or five eggs.

The sand-martin is a sociable bird; and a sandstone bank or cliff is often quite honeycombed with holes, several of these holes being often within a few inches of each other. The young birds are hatched late in May; but, alas for the tiny nestlings! The wicked crow and the cunning magpie are in wait near the entrance to the burrows in order to pounce upon the little martins in their first attempt at flight.

Many of the sociable birds dwelling in community contrive to pass their lives in perfect amity with each other. This, however, cannot be said of the sand-martin, as it is sadly given to quarrelling with its own brethren; and, when thus engaged, it gives utterance to a succession of hoarse screaming cries. Sand-martins often unite to mob large birds, such as the hawk; but, while doing so, they often suffer for their foolhardiness by seeing the adversary sail away with one of their screaming companions in its claws.—*D. B. McKean, in the Housewife.*

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

I.

Hidden Cities.

In beginning our journey, we will start from a city
Where the men are all wise, the women all witty:
They call it the Hub (1),—you every one know it,—
Thence to the City of Elms (2) which lies just below it.
Through the Land of Steady Habits (3) away to big Gotham (4),
So great and so rich you can't reach to the bottom
Of its wealth and its power. Now right on our way
Lies the City of Churches (5) where we make but short stay;
For, after the Brotherly Love City (6) before the day closes,
We must speed on our way to the City of Roses (7);
Take a look at the City of Distances Magnificent (8),
Where we count that our time most worthily is spent.
Now aboard of the train that we know never waits
We all take our seats for the City of Straits (9).
We are blown from the blustering, great Windy City (10)
To the Monumental City (11), which to miss would be pity.
The handsome Gate City (12) we take on our route,
Then circle the Crescent (13) as we turn right about.
And by the City of Rocks (14) take our flight to the ocean
To see the Golden Gate City (15), which is quite to our notion.
By the City of Violated Treaty (16), far over the sea,
To the City of Palaces (17) our way must now be.
Through the City of Victory (18) by the City of Masts (19)
To the City of Violet Crown (20) we'll speed while day lasts,
Not forgetting Auld Reekie (21) nor the Bride of the Sea (22)

Nor the City of Flowers (23) nor Sweet Little Paris (24).
Then back to Columbia (25), the Land we love best,
The true home of freedom and peace and of rest.

(*Outlook.*)

II.

Charade.

My first is to repair, or make as good as new.

My second is a letter dear to each of us.

My third is what you know all hypocrites will do.

My whole is one of those who oft beseech of us.

And, should you give old clothes to the poor soul,

Add buttons, thread, and needle to your dole,

Or else my whole can say to you my whole.

(*St. Nicholas.*)

III.

Numerical Enigma.

I am composed of 67 letters, and form a quotation from the works of Douglas Jerrold.

My 42, 24, 16, 58, is to seize with the teeth.

My 8, 3, 20, 38, 66, is on every tea table.

My 23, 55, 46, 30, is to confront.

My 52, 47, 26, 35, 6, 60, are small quantities of silk or yarn.

My 64, 12, 33, 62, 40, 43, 49, is bestowed.

My 53, 63, 28, 10, 57, 7, 19, is part of a gun.

My 21, 17, 54, 14, 39, 48, 34, is fine woollen yarn used in knitting and embroidery.

My 13, 25, 2, 4, 44, 50, 37, 61, 31, are coverings.

My 22, 41, 59, 67, 65, is pertaining to ancient Scandinavia.

My 29, 15, 56, 45, 9, 1, is pertaining to a northern country of Europe.

My 11, 18, 36, 27, 5, 32, 51, is pertaining to another northern country of Europe.

(*St. Nicholas.*)

Answers to Puzzles in April Number.

I.

1. Saw.
2. Plane.
3. Chisel.
4. Hammer.
5. Awl.
6. Wrench.

II.

1. Waterloo.
2. Ireland.
3. Leonidas.
4. Laurel wreath.
5. Israel.
6. Alsace.
7. Milton.
8. Cleopatra.
9. Ohio.
10. Washington.
11. Palatine.
12. Emerson.
13. Rubens.

Initials.

William Cowper.

III.

Discrimination.

IV.

Eros. Sore.
Rose. Ores.

THE BIRDS' PETITION.

Drawn up by Senator Hoar.

We, the Song-birds of Massachusetts and their Playfellows, make this Humble Petition.

We know more about you than you think we do. We know how good you are. We have hopped about the roofs and looked in at the windows of the houses you have built for poor and sick and hungry people, and little lame and deaf and blind children. We have built our nests in the trees and sung many a song as we flew about the gardens and parks you have made so beautiful for your own children, especially your poor children to play in.

Every year we fly a great way over the country, keeping all the time where the sun is bright and warm. And we know that, whenever you do anything, other people all over the great land between the seas and the great lakes find it out, and pretty soon will try to do the same thing. We know! We know! We are Americans just as you are. Some of us, like some of you, came from across the great sea. But most of the birds like us have lived here a long while; and birds like us welcomed your fathers when they came here many, many years ago. Our fathers and mothers have always done their best to please your fathers and mothers.

Now we have a sad story to tell you. Thoughtless or bad people are trying to

destroy us. They kill us because our feathers are beautiful. Even pretty and sweet girls, who, we should think, would be our best friends, kill our brothers and children, so that they may wear our plumage on their hats. Sometimes people kill us from mere wantonnes. Cruel boys destroy our nests and steal our eggs and our young ones. People with guns and snares lie in wait to kill us,— as if the place for a bird were not in the sky, but alive in a shop window or under a glass case. If this goes on much longer all your song-birds will be gone. Already we are told, in some other countries that used to be full of birds, they are almost gone; even the nightingales are being killed in Italy.

Now, we humbly pray that you will stop all this, and will save us from this sad fate. You have already made a law that no one shall kill a harmless song-bird or destroy our nests or our eggs. Will you please to make another that no one shall wear our feathers, so that no one will kill us to get them? We want them all ourselves. Your pretty girls are pretty enough without them. We are told that it is as easy for you to do this as it is for a blackbird to whistle.

If you will, we know how to pay you a hundred times over. We will teach your children to keep themselves clean and neat. We will show them how to live together in peace and love, and to agree as we do in our nests. We will build pretty houses which you will like to see. We will play about your gardens and flower-beds—ourselves, like flowers on wings—without any cost to you. We will destroy the wicked insects and worms that spoil your cherries and currants and plums and apples and roses. We will give you our best songs, and make the spring more beautiful and the summer sweeter to you. Every June morning when you go out into the field, oriole and blackbird and bobolink will fly after you and make the day more delightful to you. And, when you go home tired at sundown, Vesper Sparrow will tell you how grateful we are. When you sit on your porch after dark, Fife Bird and Hermit Thrush and Wood Thrush will sing to you; and even Whip-poor-will will cheer up a little. We know where we are safe.

In a little while all the birds will come to live in Massachusetts again, and everybody who loves music will like to make a summer home with you.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, May 1, at 25 Beacon Street, at 10.30 A.M. All persons interested are cordially invited.

Those who send reading matter to the soldiers in the Philippine Islands, are reminded that *current* periodicals, and good, bright standard novels are the kind of reading desired. Do not send *old* magazines, nor periodicals adapted especially for women. Numbers of periodicals issued within a year may be sent.

TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

The Travelling Libraries have now become an important part of Cheerful Letter work. In order that this department may be thoroughly organized and systematized, Miss Louise Brown, Box 91, South Framingham, Mass., has kindly consented to take it in charge. Will those interested in these libraries, and desiring information, kindly address Miss Brown as above?

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.